

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 9, 18, 21-29 and 31-39 are pending in this application. Claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-20, and 30 have been canceled. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 9 and 18 were allowable over the art of record. For at least the reasons stated below, Applicants assert that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

1. Information Disclosure Statement

In Applicant's Response to Final Office Action (filed on August 16, 2004) the issue of the Information Disclosure Statement was addressed. Specifically, Applicant directed the Examiner's attention to page 2 of the previously filed Dayco statement, in which in column 1 of the table indicates the serial numbers of the related applications are listed. Applicants believe this information addresses the Examiner's concerns and that the Dayco statement should be acceptable. In Advisory Action I, or Advisory Action II, this issue was not specifically addressed. Applicants request confirmation that this issue has been sufficiently resolved.

2. Claim Amendments

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that independent claims 9 and 18 were allowable over the prior art of record, and rejected all other pending claims. Applicants filed a Response to the Final Office Action on August 16 submitting claimed amendments and arguments to address all of these rejections. In Advisory Action I, the Examiner considered Applicants' arguments and concluded that they did not place the case in condition for allowance.

In response to Advisory Action I, further amendments were made in an effort to put the case in condition for allowance (response filed December 6, 2004). These amendments modified dependencies of various claims so they all depended from the claims previously indicated as allowable. In response, the Examiner issued Advisory Action II, indicating that certain problems remained with the claims. The claim amendments set out in the December 6, 2004 response were not entered.

In this Amendment, Applicants are now canceling previously pending independent

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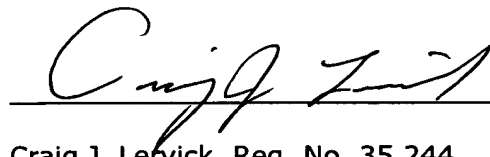
claims 20 and 30, and amending certain claims to now depend from claim 9. As indicated above, claim 9 had previously been indicated as allowable. Additionally, new claims were added which all depend from claim 18. These new claims are similar to those previously presented in relation to claim 20, but now depend from allowable claim 18. Consequently, all remaining claims now depend from an allowable base claim and as such should be allowable. In addition, claims 21 and 31 have been amended to address the issues raised in Advisory Acton II.

The amendments above should not be construed as a concession or agreement to the positions taken by the Examiner with regard to the canceled claims. Applicants reserve the right to further pursue these claims via continuation.

3. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully requests that a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. In the event a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at (612) 607-7387. If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this paper, then the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees, including fees for any extension of time, to Deposit Account No. 50-1901 (Docket 60021-352901).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig J. Lervick", is written over a horizontal line.

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